undp

update

Vol. 4, no. 19, 16 September 1991
Published by the Division of Information, United Nations Development Programme, One UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017

news & events

Brussels. Representatives of major industrialized countries, the World Bank and UN agencies will meet here with Albanian Vice Prime Minister Gramoz Pashko on 17-18 September. The meeting is being organized by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and UNDP to raise funds to help Albania deal with its continuing economic crisis.

The donor meeting follows reports by fact-finding teams that have highlighted the severity of the current situation in Albania. Over the last year, missions have been sent by the ECE, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, individual countries including the U.S. and Switzerland, and the UN Inter-Agency Humanitarian Needs Assessment Mission.

The meeting will focus on Albania's need for further emergency aid and for long-term technical and financial assistance. Senior Albanian officials, led by Mr. Pashko, are to present the country's plans for economic reform.

In a letter to invitees, Mr. Pashko said, "The Government of Albania is now firmly engaged in the process of democratization and is concurrently willing to move towards a market economy. The transition period is now well underway but a successful outcome is not yet guaranteed due, in many respects, to the limited financial resources presently available."

New York. UNDP expects to increase the level of money, programmes and staff devoted to urban programmes and will change its approach to make aid to cities more effective.

In a strategy paper, "Cities, People and Poverty: Urban Development Co-operation for the 1990s," UNDP says that while the developing world's urban population doubled over the past 20 years, foreign aid organizations helped solve some urban problems but "they did far too little to strengthen the capabilities of institutions responsible for cities and towns." The need for help is urgent. Recent urbanization means that more than 300 million residents live in "crushing poverty," says the report. By the end of the decade, about 90 per cent of poor households in Latin America, 45 per cent in Asia and 40 per cent in Africa will be concentrated in urban areas.

To meet the needs of the poor, UNDP will adopt development strategies which are closely linked to the Human Development Reports of 1990 and 1991, and are integrated with the governments' development strategies.

UNDP invested more than US$245 million over 20 years in directly targeted urban projects, but that was only two per cent of total UNDP grants during the two decades. Another $3 billion was invested in projects that indirectly benefitted urban dwellers. In the 1992-1996 grant cycle, UNDP expects to increase its direct investment in cities, collaborating with the World Bank, the UN Centre for Human Settlements and other UN agencies.

The book and further information are available from Shabbir Cheema, Principal Technical Adviser, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation, UNDP, at (212) 906-5054.

New York. At the invitation of the Government of Mongolia, UNDP Administrator William H. Draper III will chair a donors' consultation meeting in Ulaanbataar on 9-10 October.

The meeting will bring together representatives from 25 countries and several international organizations, including the European Community, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and UN agencies. It will set the stage for a full Round Table meeting in May 1992 where the government and its principal aid partners will discuss funding and implementation of economic policies, strategies and programmes.

The government is already receiving some assistance in its efforts to restructure the economy. The country-wide shortage of construction materials and transport equipment will be eased by a $14.5 million grant from the Japanese government. The grant will be used for procuring goods and equipment through UNDP's Office for Project Services (OPS).

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The Mongolian government has asked OPS to rush bulldozers, dump trucks, tyres, and building materials to Ulaanbataar before winter sets in at the end of this month.

Under a separate grant, the U.S. government will give UNDP $270,000 in cost-sharing funds to support a six months economic advisory mission to Mongolia.

The mission will provide in-depth training in economic and enterprise management to government officials. It will help improve the applied research capacity at the Mongolian Institute of Administration and Management Development.

UNDP is funding a computerized information system to record and process geological data on the country's untapped reserves of oil, coal, iron, copper, tin and tungsten. The UN Fund for Science and Technology for Development will manage the project with the UN Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration.

New York. Thousands of Liberian women refugees in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana will receive technical and capital assistance from the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to help them cope with the difficulties of displacement.

UNIFEM is emphasizing the need to rapidly build up local food availability as relief supplies are already falling short. The women refugees will be helped with credit and access to agricultural land. They will also be encouraged to resume businesses they had in Liberia or to develop new employment skills. UNIFEM has committed $216,000 to the project.

The project is directed at easing the burden on host populations of caring for the thousands of people fleeing strife-torn Liberia. Local women are to be included in income-generation and health education programmes. Semi-permanent housing built under the UNIFEM project will later revert to host-country governments.

New York. More than $25,000 raised by the United Nations Staff Relief Committee for Flood Victims in China will be channelled through UNDP for relief work in the worst-affected areas of the country.

A cheque was handed over by Wai-Tsu Fan, co-chairperson of the Relief Committee, to UNDP Administrator William H. Draper III on 5th September.

Over a thousand people died in May and June this year in the worst floods in China's recent history. Millions lost homes, crops and businesses. UNDP co-ordinated an international relief effort that provided emergency supplies and construction materials for temporary homes. But funds are desperately needed to aid reconstruction, said Mr. Fan, who said that the Chinese government estimates that the floods caused over $6 billion in damage.

The Relief Committee welcomes further contributions. A second cheque for the flood victims will be given to UNDP in October. For details contact Mr. Wai-Tsu Fan at (212) 963-6987.

projects approved by the action committee

(all approvals subject to modification; sums quoted in US dollars)

14 August 1991

China. Despite improvements over the past few decades, some 260 million rural people in China still live without access to clean water or adequate sanitation. This project supports a government decision to introduce an affordable water supply and sanitation system throughout the country. The project will use appropriate and low-cost technology for water supply and sanitation in six remote provinces or autonomous regions -- Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Yunnan, Guangxi, Gansu and Hunan. Provincial and county governments will be strengthened with training and guidance in developing strategies for community-based water supply and sanitation programmes, including investment guidelines. A primary focus of the project is to ensure participation of local communities and women. Fifty wells will be dug in each area to train local staff and establish community organization and cost-recovery programmes. The project will be reviewed at its conclusion to determine whether similar strategies should be used nationally. Proposed UNDP contribution: $1,186,000 for consultants, engineers, study tours, training and equipment. Executed by the government in co-operation with the World Bank. Implemented by the National Patriotic Health Campaign Committee. (CPR/91/141)

Nepal. Nepal's rapidly growing urban centres have poor water and sanitation services. The Nepal Water Supply Corporation (NWSC), established in 1989 to provide water and sanitation services to urban areas, is currently operating at a large loss. Because of its financial problems, the NWSC is unable to adequately serve even the 12 towns it administers at present. These difficulties are compounded by a five per cent annual urban population growth

rate. UNDP will support the government's efforts to provide water and sanitation services to the municipalities currently served by the NWSC. UNDP will provide funds to subcontract a competent water utility company in Asia or elsewhere to assist staff at the NWSC and to improve management capabilities. Proposed UNDP contribution: $3.4 million for a subcontract, equipment and miscellaneous costs. Executed by the International Labour Organisation and implemented by the NWSC. (NEP/91/027)

Turkey. UNDP is supporting a major initiative by the Government of Turkey to improve health care in eight provinces. UNDP's Office for Project Services (OPS) will advise Turkish officials at the Ministry of Health on purchasing medical equipment and other supplies. The project will help prepare a set of specifications for equipment, identify and select suppliers, and train Ministry of Health officials in international procurement. Funds of $1,336,036 from government cost-sharing are to pay for services of an international procurement adviser, training and equipment. Executed by UNDP/OPS and implemented by the Ministry of Health. (TUR/91/008)

7 August 1991

Regional project:

Latin America and the Caribbean. Assistance from UNDP is aimed at increasing marine trade and commerce on the Paraguay Waterway, potentially the least expensive transportation route in the southern cone of South America. The Waterway, comprising the Parana and Paraguay rivers, links Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Currently, transportation has been limited to roughly three million tonnes a year because of time-consuming bureaucratic and administrative procedures. This project supports an initiative taken in 1990 by the five nations to increase transportation on the Waterway. The Inter-governmental Committee of the Waterway (CIH) was established to resolve multinational conflicts and to manage the Waterway. UNDP will assist the CIH in carrying out pre-investment studies on improving Waterway infrastructure, including environmental impact reports. Mapping needs of the Waterway will also be examined. The Committee's planning capacity to develop the waterway for regional integration is to be strengthened. Proposed UNDP contribution: $1,060,500, of which $546,847 is third-party cost-sharing from the Interamerican Development Bank. Funds are to pay for experts, subcontracts, training and equipment. Executed by UNDP/OPS and implemented by CIH. (RLA/90/012)

Interregional project:

INT/91/701. War, civil strife and natural disasters have displaced more than 15 million persons worldwide, straining the meagre resources of developing countries. It is crucial that emergency relief efforts be combined with development programmes. UNDP, through its field offices, will assist host governments in coping with refugees and displaced persons. UNDP's Humanitarian Programmes, which provide logistical support to field offices, will help assess the needs of countries supporting displaced populations. The project is aimed at improving long-term rehabilitation efforts. Additional funds of $457,833 from UNDP's Special Programme Resources are to pay for senior experts, travel and administrative costs. Executed by UNDP/OPS.

24 July 1991

Senegal. Assistance from the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) is part of a national plan to develop a network of rural roads aimed at reaching isolated regions and promoting economic growth. UNCDF will help build four dirt roads covering 143 kilometres in Senegal's southeast region of Tambacounda. This will link over 100 villages, with a total population of 27,000, in Tambacounda to other transport routes, easing movement and marketing of agricultural crops between regions. SODEFITEX, the regional agricultural development agency that currently maintains over 300 kilometres of road in the area, will be responsible for the care of the new roads. Proposed UNCDF contribution: $5,105,520 for subcontracts to construction engineering firms. Proposed Co-operating Agency: UNDP/OPS. Implemented by the Ministry of Equipment, Transport and the Sea. (SEN/87/C03)

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World Development

update

Vol. 4, no. 20, 30 September 1991
Published by the Division of Information, United Nations Development Programme, One UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017

news & events

New York. Cambodia is to receive a US$12 million grant for rehabilitation and development from UNDP, according to an agreement signed on 17 September by Prince Norodom Sihanouk, President of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia and UNDP Administrator William H. Draper III.

Mr. Draper said that the commitment was made in response to the economic and political changes underway in Cambodia. The prospects of a comprehensive political settlement under the aegis of the UN are now very promising. In preparation for this, UNDP has already fielded and supported sevefal fact-finding missions to Cambodia at the request of the Office of the UN Secretary-General.

The $12 million grant will be used to finance two two-year projects.

Under one project, UNDP will coordinate emergency relief for the 200,000 displaced people in the country. Existing coordinating mechanisms will be strengthened as the number of donors and recipients is likely to increase in response to the rapid progress in the peace process. Cambodian refugees in other countries are expected to return and to need aid in resettling. A unit at the UNDP Liaison Office in Phnom Penh will gather data on humanitarian needs, coordinate the work of local authorities and donors, and monitor contributions. The project will also provide emergency rehabilitation assistance to help communities reintegrate returnees from the Thai border, internally displaced persons and thousands of demobilized soldiers.

The second project addresses the training needs of Cambodians in the country and in the border camps in Thailand. Prolonged civil strife has left Cambodia with a lack of trained and skilled personnel. The project will assess training needs. Training will be provided in Cambodia and overseas, and will focus primarily on agriculture, education, health and basic infrastructure.

UNDP and the Office of the UN Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) are also coordinating emergency assistance to help Cambodia cope with ongoing floods that have devastated villages and destroyed much of the season's crops. According to reports from UNDP's Liaison office in Phnom Penh, food and temporary shelter are urgently needed. Medicines, blankets, plastic sheets, canned food and supply boats are reaching Phnom Penh from donors. Major contributions have been made by UNDP, UNDRO, UNICEF, the Australian and Japanese governments, the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Coordination of Cambodian Humanitarian Assistance Programmes, and the League of Red Cross Societies. Transportation has been provided by the Australian and US air forces. The floods have damaged a large section of the country's irrigation system, and this is likely to jeopardize the dry season's crops.

New York. The conflict between agricultural commodity policies currently being pursued by African governments and the pressing need for food security was highlighted in a symposium held here on 5 September by the Advocates for African Food Security.

Participants at the symposium stressed that the goal of food security for Africa requires that national governments change their agricultural commodity policies. A statement adopted at the symposium said, "Past commodity strategies have been shaped by a perceived need to increase exports and earn hard currency, often at the expense of national and regional food security. Commodity strategies that insist on diversification would not only be consistent with the goal of food security, but also enhance it. By promoting the consumption of locally grown, especially indigenous food crops, agricultural production would be increased among subsistence and other farmers. This would stimulate rural employment, help eliminate dependence on food imports, save foreign currency, and balance production with African patterns of consumption."

The annual symposium, which is supported by UNDP and the UN Development Fund for Women, brought together representatives from non-governmental groups, UN agencies and other international organizations. The Advocates Group emphasizes the central role of women in African agriculture and mobilizes financial and human resources to help African women meet the goal of food security.

New York. More than $130 million in emergency relief aid has been earmarked for the famine-threatened Horn of Africa countries. The funds were pledged at a 16 September Consolidated Inter-Agency meeting here of representatives of donor countries, the affected African nations and UN agencies.

The total is still substantially short of the $400 million targeted in the appeal by UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. "Donors have been generous but they have still to understand the enormity of the problem in the Horn," said Randolph Kent, adviser to the UN Special Emergency Programme for the Horn of Africa (SEPHA). Mr. Kent says that SEPHA is spearheading an effort to reach the target figure through further pledges from donors. The funds are to meet emergency relief needs until the end of the year.

In an address to the pledging conference, UNDP Administrator William H. Draper III said that a major humanitarian crisis was once again unfolding in the region. Civil war, poor economic policies and drought have put over 20 million people in the region at risk of starvation, he noted.

Emergency relief when people are on the brink of starvation is not an adequate answer to the region's recurrent food shortfalls, Mr. Draper said. Donors must support the UN system in building disaster preparedness programmes, particularly short-term work projects to employ vulnerable groups. "We have seen in other countries, such as Botswana and India, how alternative sources of income can be immediately mobilized in times of drought through government interventions," he said. Improvements made to community assets such as roads and dams in these work projects would contribute to long-term development objectives.

Funds pledged at the conference will be used primarily for emergency relief measures, including food supplies and distribution. UN assistance will also aim to strengthen agriculture through providing seeds and tools and livestock vaccination.

Maidstone. Inexpensive public health measures could save 30 million people in the next decade from disabilities caused by unsafe pregnancies, communicable childhood diseases, parasitic infections, leprosy and tobacco consumption. Virtually all the people at risk are from low-income countries. And from $15 to $40 for surgery for each disabled person would restore sight, movement or hearing to 40 million people in these countries.

Participants at the International Conference on the Prevention of Disability emphasized the possibility of reaching these goals at a conference held at Leeds Castle in the U.K. on 1-3 September. Attended by health administrators, clinical specialists, representatives from non-governmental organizations and UN agencies, government officials and politicians, the conference was organized by the International Initiative Against Avoidable Disablement, known as IMPACT. IMPACT is co-sponsored by UNDP, UNICEF and the World Health Organization.

The conference comes at the close of the United Nations Decade of Disabled People. Participants at the conference referred to the achievements made over these years, particularly in increasing immunization coverage and in reducing blindness. A declaration adopted at the conference notes: "The decade which has passed since the first Leeds Castle Seminar on the Prevention of Disablement has witnessed the beginnings of this revolutionary change. The combined efforts of UN agencies, national governments, non-governmental groups, organizations of disabled persons and the IMPACT initiative hold clear promise for even greater advances in the control of disability over the next decade."

But these achievements are dwarfed by outstanding problems and increasingly threatened by new health risks, the declaration notes. Millions of children are still not reached by immunization despite the availability of inexpensive vaccines. Hearing loss continues to affect over 70 million people. Some 200 million people are afflicted with mental disabilities, caused largely by suffocation during unsupervised childbirth and by iodine deficiency in children.

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The previous decade's achievements are also threatened by the growing AIDS pandemic and the spread of tobacco consumption in poorer countries. The declaration notes, "Unless decisive action is taken, the present number of disabled persons, estimated at no less than 500 million, could double during the next 40 years. Disability on that scale, at its worst in the poorest countries, represents a prime cause of deprivation and economic loss."

projects endorsed by the action committee

(all projects subject to modification; sums quoted in US dollars)

28 August 1991

China. Despite considerable growth in foreign trade relations, China still lacks expertise in international business systems and procedures. In particular, most government officials currently in charge of foreign economic relations were trained at state-owned or collective enterprises, and have little experience of corporate organizations. The Chinese government is concerned that the absence of training capacity will hamper the rapid development of trade and foreign investment ties. UNDP is to support the government's efforts to upgrade training capacity at university and training institutes in the important commercial provinces of Jiangxi and Shandong. The newly established training centres in these two provinces will be assisted by UNDP in designing and conducting courses in international business. Some 2,700 officials are expected to be trained by the end of the four year project. Concepts and programmes developed here are to be transferred to other training centers in China. Proposed UNDP contribution: $1,591,000 for experts, subcontracts for executive-level training programmes in Hong Kong and Singapore, group training, training materials and equipment. Government executed and implemented by the China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges. (CPR/91/541)

Sri Lanka. As part of its economic restructuring plans, the Sri Lankan government is seeking to develop an efficient social security system that will protect employees, the self-employed and nationals employed abroad. Previous assistance by UNDP and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) was directed at designing a social insurance pension plan. This project will support the government's efforts to comply with World Bank structural adjustment policies that, among other steps, requires the government to convert the Employees Provident Fund into an Employees Pension Scheme. The government is undertaking this change in tandem with the establishment of a National Social Security Scheme. The national scheme will also cover people too poor to contribute to the scheme. UNDP will assist the government with the technical and financial aspects of developing the National Social Security Scheme and in the shift to the Employees Pension Scheme. Proposed UNDP contribution: $833,798 for a project coordinator in social insurance, experts in social security computerization, 20 fellowships, training and equipment. Executed by ILO and implemented by the Social Security Board, Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training. (SRL/89/007)

21 August 1991

Jamaica. Typhoid is endemic to the Westmoreland area, located at the southwestern tip of this island-nation. Seven people died and another 187 were confirmed to have contracted typhoid in two major outbreaks last year. Some 400 more people are suspected to have been sickened with this water-borne infection. The area's poor sanitation services and health care facilities leave people vulnerable to cholera and more attacks of typhoid. UNDP and the US Agency for International Development are assisting the Government of Jamaica to improve primary health care services and to upgrade laboratories and surveillance systems. Water quality and access to clean drinking water will be improved by rehabilitating distribution systems and installing new ones. Sanitation and sewage treatment facilities are to be significantly improved. An outreach programme will be used to educate communities on sanitation and health care practices. Proposed UNDP

contribution: $1,851,995 for an epidemiologist and a health education specialist, two UN Volunteers and subcontracts. Executed by UNDP's Office for Project Services and implemented by the Ministry of Health in cooperation with the National Water Commission. (JAM/91/004)

staff movements

Ali Ahmed Attiga will serve as Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States and Europe from 4 October. He succeeds **Mohamed A. Nour** who is retiring. Mr. Attiga has been Resident Representative in Jordan since 1987. Prior to that, Mr. Attiga was Secretary-General, Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Pierre-Claver Damiba leaves his post as Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa on 1st October to stand as a candidate in forthcoming presidential elections in Burkina Faso. **Garth Ap Rees** will assume the post of Officer-in-Charge of the Regional Bureau for Africa.

Jean Jacques Graisse, until recently Resident Representative in Kenya, is to serve as Deputy Assistant Administrator of the new Bureau of External Relations, Director of the Division of External Relations and Secretary of the Governing Council from 1st October.

Sarah L. Timpson will serve as Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation from 1st October. In addition to this post, Ms. Timpson will also head the Programme Development and Support Division. The Division merges the functions of the present Technical Advisory Division, the Divisions for Non-Governmental Organizations and Women in Development and the Management Development Programme.

Søren Dyssegaard will join on 1 October as Director of the new Public Affairs Division, formerly Division of Information. He succeeds **J. Russell Boner**, who is retiring. Mr. Dyssegaard has since 1984 served as director of information at DANIDA, Copenhagen. Before that post, Mr. Dyssegaard was Counsellor for press and cultural relations at the Embassy of Denmark, Washington D.C.

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